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What We Believe

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What We Believe

By several Christadelphians



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WHAT WE BELIEVE

The Bible, the Foundation of our Faith

IN making a public statement of our Faith, it is necessary at the outset to make it clear as to the ground on which it is based.

The Christadelphians make no claim to authority; nor have they any idea that they have received any special revelation. Although they disagree with most of the theology of the middle ages, and with the so-called "new theology"; they do so for simple reasons which they regard as transparently clear, and which they wish to lay before all lovers of truth and righteousness for their careful consideration.

In the first place it will be well to call to mind the fact that Nature is full of evidences of the existence of a Being, infinite in wisdom and power, abundant in goodness, and eternal in duration.

The tiniest atom, the drop of water, or the myriad worlds flashing their message from infinite space, tell alike of stupendous power and matchless wisdom. This Infinite One we call God.

The Universe, however, is not a collection of independent articles having no relation to each other. Each drop of water is a combination of oxygen and hydrogen, made for each other. Sun, cloud, raindrops, earth, and seed, appear to enter into a conspiracy to provide corn for the food of man and beast.

And if Purpose can be discerned in the constitution and arrangement of parts, it must also be inferred as involved in the whole. If purpose is seen in the floating clouds and the falling raindrop, there is a purpose in the creation of Man. What is that Purpose?

To this question, Nature has no reply. Nature is silent as we look back through a thousand generations, and find its history a record of selfishness and strife ending in Death.

Yet even History gives us the hint of Purpose, in showing that man's career has been one of constant progress. But to what is he progressing? Has no one any idea what is the goal to which the race is proceeding? Can it be that the Purpose of the Creator has been kept hidden in His own mind, and that man has been left to grope in the dark?

The facts are against such a conclusion.

We have in the Bible a record of Divine communications with mankind in which promises have been conveyed, and predictions made, which throw a flood of light on human affairs; and indicate a purpose full of blessing to those who pay due heed to the Divine Will.

From the earliest period in the history of the race, right down to the era in which Jesus and His Apostles lived, there is a gradually expanding revelation of the Divine purpose, which may certainly be disregarded, but which cannot be disposed of.

What that purpose is, later writers will show.

We believe, then, that the Bible is the Record of Divine Revelation: that the Spirit of God has moved men to write—and they have written. "Holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit."

The whole Book "breathes of God." The lives of the Patriarchs, and their simple faith in God—the history of Israel and their alternations of obedience to and rebellion against the Divine law—the reigns of their kings, characterised according to their regard or disregard for God—even the acts of individuals, whether virtuous or vicious—all bear a relationship to the Divine Will or the Divine Purpose.

And what of its Predictions?

Assign what date we may to the closing chapters of Deuteronomy, they indicate features of Jewish experience reaching as far away as the year A.D. 70, when their city was destroyed and the nation finally scattered.

Whilst approving of all legitimate "criticism," whether called "Higher," or aught else, we disagree with the conclusions to which some of the critics have come. We regard the Book of Daniel (for instance) as one of the most striking instances of the Divine foreknowledge being communicated to man, notwithstanding the attempt of the late Dean Farrar and others to discredit it.

And what of the influence of the Bible? In every age it has been morally in advance of the times. It has been for eighteen centuries the most powerful influence for good which the world has had.

Good in the stern law of the decalogue. Good in the ringing words of reproof to which the Prophets gave utterance. Good especially in the heart-stirring Psalms—the cry of penitence—the calm trust in Jehovah—the thrilling songs of rejoicing. But Good above all in the surpassing excellence of the picture of

JESUS, THE SON OF GOD,

yet, the Brother of the sons of men. From His lowly birth at Bethlehem, and His humble toil as the Carpenter of Nazareth, through the agony and ignominy of the Cross, and by His triumphant rising from the dead, He has gradually become the supreme figure in history.

What does it all mean?

That He is the One to whom the old-time prophets pointed. That He is the Ideal Man for whom the ages waited, and for whose coming the Law and the Prophets were the preparation. That in Him the Divine Purpose in man's creation and history is at last realised, and He is the Head of those who form the Divine Family.

It is in the Bible and in its central glorious figure of the Christ that we avow our Faith, and in its teaching alone that we find light concerning the future.

It has become a common thing, under the leadership of prominent clerics, to reject the story of the miraculous conception, the atonement, and the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. But if the first of these be not a fact, Jesus was not the Son of God ; and if the last is an unfounded fancy, there is no evidence in existence of the possibility of a future life.

Whilst we reject much of the theology which passes for "interpretation of facts," we accept the facts themselves.

One thing is clear. Its writers are singularly honest and impartial. They cloak no man's sins ; they discredit no man's virtues. And in the case of the Evangelists, we owe our impression of the wonderful Personality of Jesus to the very simplicity and artlessness of the records. They could not describe Him ; they could only tell what He did, and what He said.

Taking the Bible as a whole—it is the Book of God. It is full of Him. It is God who created—God who called Abram—God who separated Israel from the nations and gave them His Law—God who gave them into captivity and then scattered them among all nations as they are to this day. It is God who speaks to them through the prophets, in the terrible denunciation of their sins, and in the promises of yet future blessing.

It is God who brought Jesus into being, and who raised Him from the dead, and exalted Him to His own right hand. God who gave the Power of the Holy Spirit to the Apostles, commissioning them to proclaim remission of sins in the Name of Jesus to all mankind.

It is God who "was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself"—promising to be a Father and to give eternal life to all who respond to His call. It is God who at last will "dwell with men, and they shall be His people, and He will be their God." God who will wipe all tears from their eyes, when "there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain."

God shall be all—and in all.

Men may reject the testimony of the Book, but the present life then loses the brightest of its joys, and the future is shrouded in impenetrable gloom.

But with The Book, studied, understood, cherished, and paid full heed to ; it becomes our guide in youth, the counsellor of our mature age, the source of consolation in times of darkness, the remover of sorrow, the antidote to fear, the bearer of messages of peace as we pass into the silence of death, and the inspiration of an unquenchable confidence and joy in Christ Jesus—a confidence that neither life nor death can separate from the love of God as manifest in Him.

*Trinity - the union of the Father
the Son, and the Holy Ghost in
one Godhead: one God as to
substance, three persons as to individuality*

God and Christ as taught in the Bible

THE starting-point of all religion is the recognition of the existence of God. It is the fundamental theme of the entire Bible. The Bible commences with it: "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth"; while the scheme of divine dealings with the human race leads up to a condition of things which the apostle Paul describes as God being "all in all" (1 Cor. xv. 28). The problem of God is one which, in the absence of revelation, baffles the human intellect. The finite mind experiences immense difficulty in the attempt to realise self-existence, and infinity whether of time or space. The denial of these is, however, an impossibility. There must be behind and beneath all things that we know, a power, self-existent, infinite, and eternal; and we might find reason for concluding intelligent and beneficent.

Where unaided mental speculation fails, the Bible comes to our assistance with a revelation concerning God, sufficient for and adapted to our needs. It does not profess to tell us all about God, but so much as we are capable of apprehending, and so much as it is necessary for us to know. And when we come to carefully examine this teaching, we are struck by its complete harmony with what may be discovered from scientific experience of the divine works and of the laws which we find operating in the universe. Modern discovery has emphasised the unity of nature, rendering impossible the conception of more than one God. In the early ages of Biblical history, men believed in many gods, and entertained ideas so low that they became capable even of worshipping the work of their own hands. From the very outset, however, the Bible representation of God is that of ONE GOD—and He the Author of all being. The first commandment to the chosen nation is, "Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God is one Lord" (Deut. vi. 4). Too great emphasis cannot be laid upon the fact that the great elementary feature of the revelation of God, according to the Bible, is that of unity. The traditional doctrine of a Trinity of persons in the Godhead, is not of the Bible, but arises from its erroneous interpretation. The word "Trinity," to which the Church is in the habit of appending the adjective "blessed"—"the Blessed Trinity"—does not appear in the Bible from Genesis to Revelation; but the passage above quoted from Deuteronomy is repeated from the lips of the Lord Jesus Christ, as recorded in Mark xii. 29. Further, the apostle Paul declares that though in human thought there are gods many and lords many, "to us there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in Him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by Him" (1 Cor. viii. 6). Again, writing to Timothy, the apostle says, "There is

one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. ii. 5).

These are clear and intelligible statements, free from the mysticism of the creeds. The Bible teaches us that "God is spirit." What "spirit" means we can only feebly conceive by analogy. It is the innermost essential power of all things as contrasted with forms of being which we see lack permanency, and which are dependent upon something behind. This God "whom no man hath seen nor can see" in the actual sense, is revealed to us in a personal relation. He is "the Father." His all-embracing energy—for "in Him we live and move and have our being" (Acts xvii. 28)—is also spoken of in the Scripture as "spirit." It is His spirit, or when directed for certain purposes "His Holy Spirit." It is not that the Father and the Spirit are two "persons." The Bible does not ask us to believe that. The Holy Spirit is that which the Father "sends forth" or "pours out": as we say an energy or an influence, bearing always in mind the limitations of our human vocabulary which is but a code of symbols built up out of our experience. An expressive passage is that which relates to creation: "Thou sendest forth Thy spirit, they are created: and Thou renewest the face of the earth" (Ps. civ. 30). God is, as the modern phrase goes, "immanent" in the universe. David says, "Whither shall I go from Thy presence, whither shall I flee from Thy Spirit?" (Ps. cxxxix. 7).

There is another unique feature pertaining to the Bible revelation of God which is in marked contrast to all the older conceptions of higher powers, and which corroborates the claim of the Bible to inspiration, and it is that the God of the Bible is a God of holiness, and of justice, and One who has a purpose of which the scope is the blessing of all nations (*see* Gal. iii. 8).

This brings us to the second part of our subject—the Bible Christ, for Christ Jesus, the "Seed of the woman," the "Seed of Abraham," the "Righteous Branch promised to David" is the One by whom the ultimate blessing of mankind is to be brought about. Who is this Jesus? Popular tradition asserts that He was the second person of a Triune Deity, who left the throne of glory and "became man." But as we have already pointed out the word Trinity or Triune, as applicable to God, has no place in the Scripture, though his unity is repeatedly enforced. The Bible doctrine is that Jesus is "Son of God" in a special sense, above the natural sonship which pertains to mankind at large, as creatures of the Most High. The New Testament explains how and why the title of "the only-begotten Son" pertains to Him. It was because His birth was due to a direct divine intervention, as described in the early chapters of Matthew and Luke. He had no human father, but owed His birth of the Virgin Mary to the operation of the Holy Spirit. This statement is a stumbling block in the way of the so-called "rationalistic" school of theologians in our day, but when duly taken into account it furnishes, in conjunction with the continued presence of the Father with Jesus in

the days of His flesh, an adequate explanation of the unique life of holiness which puzzles the world, and the strange but gracious sayings which proceeded out of the mouth of the Nazarene Carpenter: the claim to forgive sins and the invitation, "Come unto Me, all ye that are heavy laden." III

Jesus was therefore not an eternally pre-existent person in the Godhead. The Godhead, as we have seen, is one, absolutely and completely. Jesus Himself said, "My Father is greater than I" (John xiv. 28). "The head of Christ is God" (1 Cor. xi. 3). And Jesus addressed the Father as "My God." At the same time we have to recognise the special dignity which pertained to Jesus as the only-begotten Son, and the ambassadorship which pertained to Him as the representative of the Most High. "God (that is the Father) was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself" (2 Cor. v. 19). He is to man "the power and the wisdom of God" (1 Cor. i. 24). "The Father," Jesus said, "is in Me" (John x. 38). "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father" (John xiv. 9). Many other passages might be quoted to show that even in the days of His weakness and self-abnegation Jesus is to be recognised as "God manifest in the flesh." In this capacity, though He publicly claimed them not, titles of high dignity pertain to Him. Still more so is it thus, since after His submission to death to the intent that He might share with us our bitterest experience, as well as constitute our sin-offering, God has raised Him from the dead, and has given to Him the name that is above every name. IV

The object of Christadelphian teaching is not in any way to derogate from the glory of Jesus, but to present it as it is set forth in the Scriptures, a presentation which does no violence to our intelligence as do the definitions and statements of the Trinitarian creeds.

J. J. HADLEY.

BIRMINGHAM.

The Divine Purpose

The Gospel of the Kingdom, a Key to the Understanding of the Bible, and Revealing a Glorious Future for the Earth and its Inhabitants.

IN the whole scheme of the divine revelation contained in the Scriptures, there is no subject which opens up more blessed possibilities for the human race than the doctrine of the Kingdom of God. Yet so imperfectly is the purpose of the Almighty God understood by most professing Christians, that when the words of that sublime prayer which the Lord Jesus taught His disciples to pray—"Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven"—are repeated, they convey very little of the great truth they were intended to express to the minds of those who use them. They contain a petition to God for the coming of that glorious time when He shall set up a Kingdom on the earth, when human rule and authority shall be done away for ever, and in place of the kingdoms of men, a universal Kingdom quite as real, but infinitely more powerful and blessed shall occupy their place.

To suppose, as many Christian people do, that the prayer is to be understood as referring to the reign of God in the hearts of believers, is only partially to realise what was meant by Christ. For, although it is necessary that all who would enter into the Kingdom of God must allow the will of God to reign in their hearts and lives now, yet we must not overlook the fact that the prayer asked that the Kingdom of God might come, in order that His will might be done on earth *as it is in heaven*; and though a few here and there, amidst many failures, are endeavouring to let God rule in their hearts, never, till that Kingdom is visibly established in the earth, will God's will be done by *all*, even as it is in heaven.

If the reader will have patience with me I shall be able to show the correctness of these statements and the important place these things have in the divine plan for man's salvation. We are not speaking about a side issue, it is here we get down on to the very bedrock of divine truth: we are speaking of a matter which occupied a very considerable portion of the public ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ. This will be seen by a reference to Luke ix. 1, "Then He called His twelve disciples together, and gave them power and authority over all devils, and to cure diseases. And He sent them to preach the Kingdom of God." And again Luke viii. 1, "And it came to pass afterward, that He went throughout every city and village, preaching the glad tidings of the Kingdom of God." And again, Matthew xxiv. 14, "And the Gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end be." On another occasion our Lord declares this to have been the great object of His mission,

X

for He says (Luke iv. 43), "I must preach the Kingdom of God to other cities also : *for therefore am I sent.*"

We shall soon perceive that a knowledge of the Kingdom furnishes us with a key to the understanding of the Bible. We must dismiss from our minds the popular idea of a kingdom in heaven, a kingdom in the skies, and the idea of ever entering into realms beyond the bounds of time and space, as vain hopes—delusions, about which the Bible is absolutely silent—and turn to the Scriptures to gather information about what Paul describes as "the eternal purpose which (God) purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Eph. iii. 11), "that in the dispensation of the fulness of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ."

An early intimation of this eternal purpose is seen in Gen. xii. 1, 2, 3, where God commanded the patriarch Abraham to leave his country and his father's house and go into a land which He would show him—telling him that He would there (on that land) make of him a great nation, and in him should all the families of the earth be blessed—and when Abraham had obeyed and entered the land, God further promised him (Gen. xxii. 18), "In thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed, because thou hast obeyed My voice."

The promises made to Abraham, and renewed afterwards to Isaac and Jacob, of everlasting possession of the land of Palestine and the blessing of all the families of the earth, pointed to and were to find their realisation in Christ, and, therefore, he declares in the 8th verse of Galatians iii. that "The Scripture foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the Gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed."

It will no doubt surprise many to hear that the Gospel was preached to Abraham, but the reason will soon be manifest. That Abraham perceived a lengthy period would elapse before the promise was fulfilled will be seen by the statement of the Lord Jesus (John viii. 56)—"Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day : and he saw it, and was glad."

Although Abraham and his successors, the heirs with him of the same promise, sojourned in the land of promise, they never entered into possession. Still they never lost hope, as the Scripture declares (Heb. xi. 13)—"These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth." The writer of the Epistle, explaining this apparent delay, says (Heb. xi. 39), "And these all, having obtained a good report, through faith, received not the promise : God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect." These words furnish another confirmation of God's eternal purpose to gather together all things in Christ.

We shall now see by a brief review of Scripture testimony, which might be much enlarged if space permitted, how voluminous

is the evidence for the establishment of a Kingdom of God upon the earth with the Lord Jesus Christ as King.

In Old Testament history we find that the Jews, the lineal descendants of Abraham, established a kingdom under the law of Moses in the land of Palestine, which was also God's Kingdom on the earth (*see* 1 Chron. xxviii. 5). This kingdom was destroyed and ended, but the Scriptures testify that it is to be restored, at a set time, when, according to Peter (Acts iii. 20), God "shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: whom the heaven must receive *until* the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began."

That the setting up of God's Kingdom does await the return of Jesus Christ may be further seen by the words of the prophet, uttered during the reign of Zedekiah, the last king of Judah (Ezek. xxi. 25), "And thou, profane wicked prince of Israel, whose day is come, when iniquity shall have an end; thus saith the Lord God, Remove the diadem, and take off the crown; . . . I will overturn, overturn, overturn it; and it shall be no more, *until* He come whose right it is; and I will give it Him."

There can be no doubt that the Coming One is Christ, when we read the announcement of the Angel to Mary before His birth (Luke i. 32)—"He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David: and He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of His kingdom there shall be no end."

He is now at the Father's right hand awaiting the time of which the Psalmist spoke (Ps. ii. 8), saying, "Ask of Me (the Father) and I shall give Thee the heathen for Thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possession." This will usher in the glorious era of which Daniel the prophet spoke (chap. vii. 27), when "The kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom *under* the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the Saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey Him."

From many such testimonies as these we see there is a bright future in store for earth's inhabitants, a prospect of sharing with Christ in the government of His kingdom, of having these mortal bodies changed and fashioned like unto His glorified body, of living in an age when oppression and crime shall be suppressed—the tears wiped away from off all faces—when "the redeemed of the Lord shall return and come with singing unto Zion."

J. W. BRADY.

BIRMINGHAM.

The Jews, their Land and City in Relation to the Divine Purpose with the Earth and Mankind

The Past

EVERY one who has intelligently read the Bible and secular history knows that the Jews, their Land and City, have played an important part in God's dealings with mankind.

God separated the descendants of Abraham "to be a peculiar people unto Himself," and gave them their land, their laws, and their religion. "And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation" (Exod. xix. 6). "Who are Israelites : to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises" (Rom. ix. 4). He made them the custodians of His Revelation to mankind, for "unto them were committed the oracles of God" (Rom. iii. 2). All the earth belongs to God, but it pleased Him to choose the land which He promised to Abraham and his descendants to be the theatre of manifold manifestations of His power. "A land which the Lord thy God careth for : the eyes of the Lord thy God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year" (Deut. xi. 12). Truly these are remarkable words ! And of Jerusalem He said, "The city which I have chosen Me to put My name there" (1 Kings xi. 36). Of no other people, land, or city upon the face of the earth could these words be said.

Times almost without number have various nations fought for possession of the land of Palestine and the city of Jerusalem. The land has been drenched with blood, and the city has over and over again been overturned and "built upon her own heap." It cannot yet be said that Jerusalem has been a city of peace.

The Future

Is God now done with the Jews ? "Hath God cast away His people ?" Many people think so. But the apostle Paul's answer to these questions is : "God hath *not* cast away His people." Although "*some* of the branches are broken off," the apostle declares "that blindness in part is happened to Israel, *until* the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so *all Israel* shall be saved" (Rom. xi. 2, 17, 25, 26). In connection with the salvation of Israel, it is abundantly clear from many parts of the Book that they are to return to the land of their forefathers an enlightened, purified, converted people. "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah. . . . After those days, saith the Lord, I will put My law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts : and will be their God, and they shall be My people, . . .

for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more" (Jer. xxxi. 31-34). Again, "Behold, I will take the children of Israel from among the nations, whither they be gone, and will gather them on every side, and bring them into their own land, . . . and they shall dwell in the land that I have given unto Jacob My servant. . . . My tabernacle also shall be with them : yea, I will be their God, and they shall be My people" (Ezek. xxxvii. 21-28). Their long night of sorrow and suffering and estrangement from God will then have passed away. It will be followed by a glorious day of rest, peace, and joy. They will be reconciled to God through their long-looked-for Messiah. Their reconciliation will be followed by world-wide blessing. "For if the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?" (Rom. xi. 15). When settled once more in their own land, a righteous nation, they will to the nations of the earth be an object-lesson of the foreknowledge, forbearance, and goodness of God. Their land will be the centre of a world-wide Empire under their Messiah, who will be King of Kings and Lord of Lords ; and their ancient city, then "the city of the Great King," will be the metropolis of the world.

Jerusalem will be the centre of rule and worship not only for the restored nation of Israel, but also all the nations of the earth, for God will then have "set His Anointed upon His holy hill of Zion," and "the kingdoms of this world will have become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ" (compare Ps. ii. 6-12, with Rev. xi. 15-18). From Jerusalem mankind will be divinely ruled and instructed, and as a result "many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob ; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths : for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the Word of the Lord from Jerusalem" (Isa. ii. 3).

The Temple will be rebuilt, and become "a house of prayer for all people." Thither the emancipated, enlightened peoples—Jew and Gentile—will resort to worship the God of heaven and earth. Of the nations it is foretold : "And it shall come to pass, that every one that is left of all the nations which came against Jerusalem shall even go up from year to year to worship the King, the Lord of Hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles" (Zech. xiv. 16). Again, "All nations whom Thou hast made shall come and worship before Thee, O Lord, and shall glorify Thy name" (Ps. lxxxvi. 9).

Jerusalem will then become, as her name implies, the habitation of peace. Her King will be the Prince of Peace. London, Paris, New York, will no longer be the centres of attraction. They will be eclipsed by the glory of Jerusalem, when "the Lord of Hosts reigns in Mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before His ancients gloriously." Jerusalem will be the centre of attraction for all the world. Peoples of all lands will flock there to see the grandeur of Jerusalem, the magnificence of her Temple, and to have the privi-

lege of beholding the glory of her Great King. They will bring tokens of their allegiance to Him and offerings of gratitude for the blessedness of His divine reign. "Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is Mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King" (Ps. xlviii. 2).

Let the reader look at a map of the world, and he will see at a glance how admirably situated the land of Palestine is to be the centre of universal rule and worship. In its selection divine foreknowledge is manifest. The earth's teeming millions have to be taught the knowledge of God. While no doubt divinely-appointed teachers will instruct the peoples in their different countries, yet *they will be drawn* to this universal centre. There they will see the glory of God. What an impression that will make upon them! What a tale to tell when they return to their own lands! What an incentive to righteousness to themselves, and to all!

Mankind will thus be gradually enlightened and purified until all the dwellers upon earth come to know and acknowledge the living and true God. And as a result of being in harmony with God, mankind will enjoy blessings far transcending the brightest dreams of poets, or the fondest aspirations of philanthropists. Under the rule of the Prince of Peace, mankind "shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." The nations will dwell in a brotherhood of peace, and there will not only be peace on earth and goodwill among men, but glory to God in the highest.

God's Kingdom will then in very deed be come, and His will be done upon earth as in heaven. Mankind will be supremely blessed, and God will everywhere, from the rising to the setting of the sun, be glorified by the works of His hands.

WILLIAM GRANT.

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"Coming events cast their shadows before." What do we see in our day? A great movement among the Jewish people, having for its object their re-settlement in the land of their forefathers. It is called "The Zionist Movement." Its Executive is in Europe, but it has ramifications all over the world. The scattered people are being re-united into a nation. In the long-desolate land Colonies are springing up. A great work is going on preparatory for the restoration of the whole nation under their long-promised Messiah—David's Son and Lord. In due time the divine declaration will be realised: "This people have I formed for myself: they shall shew forth my praise."

W. G.

Mortal Man, and the Promise of Eternal Life

Man not an Immortal Soul, but a Physical Being.
Future Life by Resurrection. No Eternal Torments.

WE are not acquainted with any source of knowledge from which light can be obtained upon the nature of the soul of man at the present time but one, and that is the Bible. The speculations of men—even the wisest of them—differ, and have no value apart from the inspiration of the Almighty. To those who hold to the teaching of Scripture, whose minds are unaffected by modern scepticism inside or outside the pulpit, the best thing, therefore, is to appeal to its pages, for a “Thus saith the Lord” is of more value than all the speculations of all the philosophers of ancient or modern times.

It is a remarkable feature in the teaching of many who occupy the pulpit and yet reject the teaching of the Bible in many particulars, that while they loudly profess their belief in the scientists, and are ready to accept their unproved deductions regarding the origin of the human race, and put aside the teaching of Genesis, they passionately assert their belief in the natural immortality of man, of which science knows nothing, and to which it is undoubtedly opposed. On every hand we have the evidence of the mortality, the perishability, the corruptibility of man, but no evidence that within him is another self, a soul, that cannot die, that is somehow born with every individual, and that lives on—an endless life—when all we know and see of the individual ceases to be. It is beyond the reason of man to discover the truth of this belief. Archbishop Whateley, one of the keenest thinkers the Episcopal Church has ever produced, in his work on the *Future Life* (page 17), writes thus: “That the natural immortality of man’s soul is discoverable by reason may be denied on the ground that it has not been discovered yet. No arguments from reason, independent of revelation, have been brought forward that amount to a decisive proof that the soul must survive bodily death.” Lord Macaulay and others have written to the same effect.

What saith the Scriptures? In them we read of “mortal man” (Job iv. 17), but never once in all the books of the Bible can the expression “immortal soul”—or its equivalent—be found. That is a fact which sometimes astonishes those whose hopes are based upon that belief. The words translated soul (Hebrew, *Nephesh*; Greek, *Psuche*) occur a great many times, and are translated by a variety of words, but they never have the prefix “immortal” or “deathless” or “never-dying.” “There is no clear instance,” writes Dr Albert Barnes, the commentator, “in which this Hebrew word is applied to the soul in a separate state,

or disjoined from the body. It means primarily breath ; then life, or the vital principle, a living being." A living, breathing being of any kind is its radical meaning, and it is applied alike to animals and to the human race. It is also employed to denote the various aspects in which a living person can be contemplated, and so we find it translated "person," "life," "body," "breath," etc., etc.

We have an account of the origin of the soul in Gen. ii. 7, where we read that "The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul"—or a living creature. Dr Kitto translates this "*a living animal*." It is a very singular thing that while "divines" often quote this passage to prove the spirituality and immortality of man, the apostle Paul, the best commentator, of whose reasoning upon it they seem to be ignorant, refers to it to prove the very opposite, that man is a physical being, devoid of that very quality of immortality which they suppose is therein found. You will find his argument in 1 Cor. xv. 44-47: "There is a natural" (or animal, or *soulical* body, for that is the very word used in the original, from whence comes our word "physical"); "there is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body, *and so it is written*"—here is his proof-text to show that there is a natural or animal body ; he appeals to Scripture—"SO IT IS WRITTEN, The first man Adam was made a living soul. The last Adam became a life-giving Spirit. Howbeit that is not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural ; then (or *afterwards*) that which is spiritual. THE FIRST MAN IS OF THE EARTH, EARTHY ; the second man is of heaven." How conclusive this reasoning is. Man is purely a physical being, made from the dust ; and because of sin, sentenced to return to dust again. His "foundation is in the dust." He "cannot keep alive his own soul." And "in death there is no remembrance of God" ; for "the dead know not anything" ; in "the day of death his thoughts perish" (Job iv. 19 ; Ps. vi. 5 ; cxlvi. 4 ; Eccles. ix. 5).

Immortality is the gift of God. Jesus brought it to light by the gospel, or by His own resurrection from the dead (2 Tim. i. 10). It is not inherent in man, but has to be *sought for* in the way appointed by God. To those who *seek for it* thus, God will grant "eternal life" (Rom. ii. 6, 7). This life at present is a matter of promise. It is offered as a reward to those who—believing in Christ and forsaking evil, and obeying God's commandment—become members of Christ's flock, and abide in His fold.

The New Testament is full of the revelation of this blessed and glorious life which will be bestowed at the return of Christ from heaven, and is to be understood of life in its most literal sense, in the sense of existence, the conferring of an immortal nature upon those who are found worthy of attaining to the age to come (Luke xx. 35, 36). This life will be attained by a resurrection from the dead. Jesus is "the Resurrection and the Life." He is Himself "the first-fruits of them that sleep"—"the first-begotten of the

dead" (1 Cor. xv. 23; Rev. i. 5), and He has promised to all who believe in Him that He "will raise them up at the last day" (John vi. 39, 40, 44). The doctrine and fact of the resurrection of the dead—which many are now so ready to abandon—was the great hope of the believers in the apostolic age, because it would introduce them to every good when the "Lord of life" returned. They went about everywhere preaching "Jesus, and the resurrection" (Acts iv. 2; xvii. 18). Read through the Acts of the Apostles, and you will find this to be the very staple of apostolic preaching. Read through the Epistles, and you will find it was the basis of all their hopes. *They* did not esteem it "a thing incredible that God should raise the dead." And so we find Paul striving "if by any means he might attain unto the resurrection from the dead" (Phil. iii. 11). The resurrection meant to him that great deliverance from mortal nature and all the pains and sorrows to which it is subject, which is embraced in the thought of immortality, and to which he refers in that wonderful chapter on that great hope in the words, "Behold, I show you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. But when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, *then*" (and not before) "shall come to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory" (1 Cor. xv. 51-54).

The truth concerning the nature of man destroys many false hopes and many unnecessary fears, but gives birth to glorious expectations. The coming of Christ to raise the dead and give them life eternal is the prelude to His reign upon the earth, during which righteousness will prevail and evil be exterminated, for the wicked will not be permitted to exist for ever. Evil is to be rooted out of the earth. "All the wicked will God destroy." They will not be preserved for ever in torment. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." "The wages of sin *is death*; but the free gift of God *is eternal life* in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. vi. 23). Christ will reign till all enemies are put under His feet, and death itself—that great enemy of the race—is destroyed. The world will ultimately be redeemed. Paradise will be restored. Pain and sorrow and tears and death will be known no more, and "GOD WILL BE ALL IN ALL" (1 Cor. xv. 25-28).

JOSEPH BLAND.

KIDDERMINSTER.

The Cross of Christ

"As many as desire to make a fair show in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised; only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ . . . but desire to have you circumcised, that they may glory in your flesh. But God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world. For in Christ Jesus, neither circumcision availeth anything nor uncircumcision, but a new creature" (Gal. vi. 13-15).

THE all-important teaching concerning the cross of Christ comes in the divine order to the person who has already heard and believed the glad tidings concerning the Kingdom of God. This has prepared the mind for understanding the necessity for the death of the Christ. And so in the New Testament, it is always to those who have accepted the teaching of the Kingdom of God, that the cross of Christ is explained. Such have learned that God is just in all His ways, holy in all His works, and that He changeth not.

Man having transgressed God's law, and come under the just sentence of death, could not obtain the blessing of a future life without the law being fulfilled. Death must take place, and as there was no one to help death-stricken humanity, for no one could redeem himself or his brother, God stretched forth His arm in raising up one to be the redeemer, by himself bearing the sin-stricken and death-bound nature. As he did no sin, and established the obedience required, it pleased the Father to raise him from death to life, life everlasting, and to make him a Second Adam, the beginning of a new creation.

As he is the Lord the Spirit, it is a creation of spiritual beings of which he is the Head, and, as already quoted, nothing availeth but a new creature. So the Apostle Paul wrote to the Church at Ephesus: "That ye put off concerning the former course of life, the old man which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that ye put on the new man, who after God is created in righteousness and true holiness" (chap. iv. 22-24). Again ". . . in Christ Jesus, ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition, having abolished in his flesh the enmity, the law of commandments in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; and that he might reconcile both unto God in *one body* by *the cross*, having slain the enmity in himself" (chap. ii. 13-16). This agrees with Heb. ix. 26: "In the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself." Also Heb. x. 9: "Then said he, lo I come to do thy will O God. He taketh away the first that he may establish the second, by the which *will* we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once."

How does that offering sanctify? By the law being fulfilled,

the death sentence being executed. Paul speaking of Jesus, says, "God made him sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (2 Cor. v. 21). Again, "Knowing this, that our old man *was* crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed. . . . For in that he died, he died unto sin once; but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God" (Rom. vi. 6, 10). Sin is the transgression of law. Mankind have been born under broken law, and are therefore in the *state of sin and death*, and so human nature is styled sin. "Behold I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me" (Psalm li. 5). This sin nature was destroyed in the Lord Jesus's death. Sin was put away in the body of flesh being destroyed, or as Paul states it: "For he that hath died, hath become righteously acquitted from his sin" (Rotherham's translation); and he goes on to say: "If we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him, knowing that Christ being raised from the dead, dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him" (Rom. v. 7-9).

The importance of the cross is, that by it, sin has been put away, and that, in Jesus living again, a new and living way has been consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say his flesh, a way to the Father. Under the pattern in the law, the high priest passed through the veil into the most holy with the blood of animals, showing by the figurative blood the fulfilment of the sentence of death. But in Christ we have the reality, and those who are in him can come to the Father with the knowledge that the sin has been destroyed in the pouring out of the blood of their Head and High Priest, so that with the loving confidence of children they come in Christ before the Father, who is just and willing to forgive them in all their weakness in the times of faith.

Supposing a person had all knowledge, and lived a highly moral life, according to men's ideas of morality, such a person would be a child of death, for apart from the cross of Christ there can be no salvation to any child of Adam. This is because God changeth not. His word condemning Adam to death cannot be set aside. All the human race are involved in the death sentence, for Adam was created lord of all the earth. On the principle that the head covers the body, this law will be seen through all Scripture. "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned" (Romans v. 12). In like manner the blessing, in the Second Adam, whose obedience even unto the death of the cross frees all those in him, they being in this manner justified from their past state of sin and death, for Paul says: "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God: Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God" (Romans iii. 23-25). "There is therefore now no condemnation to them who are *in* Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the

spirit. For the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death" (Romans viii. 1-2).

Notice the importance of "*in*." Jesus is the father of the age to come, and those who were his fathers, according to the flesh, are in the age to come to be his children. Just as he was the *offspring* of David, so he becomes the *root* of David (Rev. xxii. 16).

He that sanctifieth, and they who are sanctified, are all out of one (Father), for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren; and again, Behold I and the children which God hath given me, and as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also took part of the same, that through death he might render powerless that having the power of death, that is the devil" (the *diabolos*, that which causes transgression, or sinful human nature), (Hebrews ii. 11-14). This he destroyed on the cross, so that his brethren might be made free. "Who his own self bore our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed" (1 Peter ii. 24). "... he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Philippians ii. 8).

Another aspect of the cross of Christ is that of the confirming of the promises made to the Fathers of Israel, termed a covenant. The word covenant means a cutting off, and so to those who were under the just sentence of death, promises to them could only be fulfilled after that death had taken place. This was first done in a figurative manner by the slaying of animals, pointing forward to the real death on the cross of the Lord Jesus. He was "made a surety of a better covenant" (Hebrews vii. 22), better than the Mosaic which Paul styles "the ministration of death," but that of Christ, "the ministration of the Spirit," "and the Lord is that Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty."

How wonderful is God's way. Man had come under the power of death by sin. To deliver him God made His Son "to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God *in* him." As there were many faithful ones under the law, "God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that they might become sons" (Galatians iv. 4-5). As many of them were under the curse of the law, the Son "was made a curse for us; for it is written, cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree." Although in himself guiltless, "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners," he was made sin, made under the law, and made a curse. He came into the state of those under these in order that in his own person he might bear them away by suffering the penalty in himself (see Romans viii. 3). He is, as we have already shown from Paul's words, *free*. Death has no longer any power over him, and so our deliverance is in being *in* him. He is the mercy seat, the covering of the testimony or truth. All begotten of the truth are *in* him, and when he as God's righteousness looks down from heaven, truth shall spring out of the earth, in the many children which God hath given him.

In order to be among those children we must believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John iii. 16). What is it to believe in him? It is to believe what he taught, and he said that he was sent to preach the good news of the Kingdom of God, the good news of a time when all nations will recognise God and be blessed, or made happy. The question then is, how can we get *into* Christ? We get the answer in Paul's words, "As many of you as have been baptized *into* Christ, have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's then are ye Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise" (Galatians iii. 27-29). Having in this manner "received the spirit of sonship we cry Abba Father," and being children we are "heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ."

What more could the mind desire? To be free from the power of death, to have almighty power, to be with the Lord Jesus in ruling the nations on the earth in righteousness, feeding them with the true knowledge of God until the whole world is shining with his glory. Then the message of the angels at the birth of our Lord will be fulfilled, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill to men," culminating in the last enemy of man being destroyed, when all the inhabitants of the earth shall be immortal, and God shall be the all in everyone of them, when there shall be no more pain, no more sorrow, no more curse, no more death, but everlasting joy to all earth's people, and the long past night of sorrow and suffering shall be forgotten.

To sum up what has been set forth, we may call attention to the purpose of God, as revealed from the beginning, that by the cross, or death of the Christ, the evil of sin should be removed, and the righteousness of God established in the earth.

In the beginning of the human race we have the divine statement that the seed of the woman should be bruised in the heel, but that her seed should bruise the serpent's head; in the symbolic offering of Isaac, when Abraham called the name of the place "Jehovah-jireh," that is the Lord will provide, and "in the Mount of the Lord it shall be seen"; in the prophecy to David regarding his son and Lord, "in his being bowed down on account of iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, even with the stripes of the children of men"; and in that well-known passage in the liii. of Isaiah, "Surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed. It pleased Jehovah to bruise him; he hath put him to grief, *when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin*, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of Jehovah shall prosper in his hand."

We see then, that the cross of Christ was not an accident, but

was predetermined for man's salvation. As Peter and John speaking by the Spirit said, in prayer to God, "For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel were gathered together, for to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done" (Acts iv. 27-28; *see also chap. ii. 22-24*). Yes God made those wicked men do His will. They were His instruments to smite the shepherd of the sheep.

It was God fulfilling His law given to Adam at the beginning. The sentence, which was typically executed upon Adam when he was girded with the skins of the animals slain, was now executed on the Christ, who gave himself willingly to his Father's commandment. "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father" (John x. 17-18).

In this manner the Christ "humbled himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross. Wherefore also God highly exalted him, and gave unto him the name which is above every name, that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and those on earth and those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Philippians ii. 8-11).

"For the word of the cross is to them that are perishing foolishness; but unto us which are being saved it is the power of God" (1 Cor. i. 18, R.V.)

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The Second Coming of Christ: Signs of His Near Approach

IN popular preaching, and in the religious literature of the twentieth century, very little is heard of the second coming of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Some preachers, filled with nebulous spiritualising, endeavour to explain away all New Testament teaching on this fundamental subject, and declare that Christ comes individually to the believer, either at his conversion, or at death. Others, following the doctrine of evolution, and denying the miraculous,—which, however, is not a necessary corollary of evolution—deny alike the resurrection of Christ and His second advent. But the earnest student of Holy Scripture who reads the Bible for himself will find ample evidence, not only that the Bible plainly teaches that Christ will actually and literally return to this earth, but also that such a return is in accordance with the highest reason, in that it forms the culmination of a plan which Divine Wisdom has conceived and unfolded, and which is attested by many wonderful proofs both of doctrine and of history.

It is abundantly evident that the Lord Jesus fully understood, and taught, that He was to leave this earth, and that He would be absent for a considerable period. Thus, early in His ministry, He said, "Can the children of the bride-chamber mourn, so long as the bridegroom is with them? but the days will come when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast" (Matt. ix. 15). He also likened Himself to a nobleman travelling into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return (Matt. xxv. 14; Luke xix. 12), and as saying "After a *long* time the lord of these servants cometh." These passages, and many others, make it perfectly clear that Jesus saw beforehand that which would come to pass among His followers, and among the nations of the earth during His absence.

Starting thus from the ascertained fact that Jesus foreknew that He would leave His followers, that He would be away from them an indefinitely long period, and that He would return to them again, we may consider where and for what purpose He went, and in what manner and at what time He will return. In reference to the first part of this enquiry the Bible student need have little doubt or difficulty. Forty days after His resurrection from the dead He was with His disciples on the Mount of Olivet when He was taken up into heaven, and a cloud received Him out of their sight (Acts i. 9), and almost immediately afterwards the Apostle Peter, on the Day of Pentecost, refers to Jesus as having been raised up by the power of God, and as "being by the right hand of God exalted" (Acts ii. 33). Peter also applies to his Master the beautiful words of the second Psalm—"The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on My right hand *until* I make Thy foes

Thy footstool." Jesus is not yet, therefore, as many unthinkingly say, on His throne in heaven, but at His Father's right hand, and He is there in a waiting attitude, and for a purpose. This purpose we find elsewhere to be that He may act as Mediator, or priest, over His own household; and the time of waiting is with the object that the Gospel may be preached unto all nations, that the number of the elect may be made up, and that meanwhile the nations of the earth may work out their allotted destiny, after which they will be subject to the Son of God.

The manner of the return of the Lord Jesus Christ was stated in plain but beautifully simple language to His wondering disciples, on the Mount of Olivet, at the very moment of His departure. The angels said, "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken from you into heaven, shall so come *in like manner* as ye have seen Him go into heaven" (Acts i. 11). The apostles agree in putting the return of the Lord Jesus in the forefront of their teaching, and His second coming will be the most momentous fact in the history of the world, not only to His own household, but also to the whole of the nations upon earth. Thus the Apostle Peter called upon his hearers to repent and be converted, that their sins might be blotted out "when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord, and He shall send Jesus Christ . . . whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began" (Acts iii. 21). Paul and the other apostles are at one with Peter in their testimony to the fact that Christ will return. Thus the great apostle to the Gentiles, in his first letter to the Thessalonians, reminds them that they "turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven" (chap. i. 9). In the two epistles to the Thessalonians there are eight chapters, and in each of these eight chapters Paul refers to the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. Would that theologians in our day were as clear and certain on the verity of this glorious hope!

We have still to consider the remaining part of our enquiry, relative to the time at which Christ will return. To this we may at once say that the day and the hour have not been revealed to any man, and all who have claimed to know the precise time have, by so doing, proved themselves to be misinformed of the true spirit of divine revelation on this subject. The majority of mankind fulfil the prediction that there shall come in the last days scoffers who shall say, "Where is the promise of His coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation" (2 Pet. iii. 4). Here, in a nutshell, we have the "New Theology." But they are ignorant of this one thing—"That one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness; but is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should

come to repentance. For the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night" (2 Pet. iii. 8).

We live, however, in days of fuller light since we are able to see that much had to be done between the ascension and the return of Christ. Much of this work already has been finished ; some little remains. We can see that Daniel's fourth kingdom was established, that it was divided into ten other kingdoms, and that a spiritually drunken system arose to bear rule over the sons of men. We find that this "little horn" exerted temporal power for 1260 years, or for "time, times, and a half," and that this power exists to-day to be "consumed and destroyed unto the end" (Dan. vii. 24-28). We know that the temple was to be destroyed, and Jerusalem "trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled" (Luke xxi. 24). We know that the Jews were to be dispersed into every land under heaven, and that they have yet to look on Him they pierced, and mourn. These and many similar things enable us to see the reasons for the interval which has elapsed, and also to see that we are rapidly approaching, if we are not already almost at, the end of the time of waiting.

When Christ does come He will "come quickly ;" that is to say, without warning and unexpectedly. His own command was clear, "Watch, therefore ; for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched" (Matt. xxiv. 42). "Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with . . . the cares of this life, and that day come upon *you* unawares. For as a snare shall it come upon all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth" (Luke xxi. 34). Our Lord continues as follows :—"Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man" (verse 36). The true believer, therefore, is not of those who, following the wisdom of this world, dwell in spiritual darkness. To him the Scriptures have revealed the plan of the ages, and he lives in anticipation of the immediate return of Christ ; though, if need be, he will be prepared to faithfully wait, being assured that "yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry" (Heb. x. 37).

T. TURNER.

BIRMINGHAM.

The Devil and Satan: What is the Bible Devil?

THE subject of this chapter is not a popular one at the opening of the twentieth century. The time was when his "Satanic Majesty" was supposed to be exceedingly active—"going about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he might devour"—and pulpit rhetoric was volubly expended, warning the flock of the danger with which they were daily surrounded. The Devil was understood to be at all times on the alert to entrap unwary souls, and allure them to his warm dominions for everlasting tormentation. But he has gone out of fashion. Religious preachers do not now discourse with the same eagerness and earnestness, nor yet so frequently, upon the prowess of the Prince of the Fallen Angels; at the same time they are unable to dispense with his services altogether. "A Manual of Theology," extending to 560 odd pages, has been issued by Dr Agar Beet, and in this book we find the Devil only receives one-and-a-quarter pages of attention at the end of one of the chapters. If it would have been possible to have dispensed altogether with his services, no doubt the author of this treatise would have been one of the first to seize the opportunity.

Whence the idea of a deathless, indefatigable agent of evil, operating in direct antagonism to the Author of life? Does it come from the Bible? Those holding it, no doubt conscientiously believe it to be the reflection of the light shed forth in that Holy Book, and going there with the preconception that all are, by virtue of being creatures of God, immortal and destined to spend an unending existence hereafter in either bliss or woe, will find many statements clothed in phraseology which, wrested from the context, are well calculated to support the theory.

Many of these passages have been utilised in the weaving of that great fantasy of the Puritan age—John Milton's "Paradise Lost"—which has done more to give shape and colour to the doctrine of an unseen immortal agent of evil than any other writing in our language. In his inimitable verse he represents Satan as having once been an angel of light dwelling in heaven in unison with God, but owing to his leadership in a rebellion against omnipotent authority—

" . . . Him the Almighty Power
Hurled headlong flaming from th' ethereal sky,
With hideous ruin and combustion, down
To bottomless perdition, there to dwell
In Adamantine Chains of penal fire,
Who durst defy th' Omnipotence to arms."

"Since whatever exists has been created by God, we infer with certainty that even Satan and his angels are His creatures" (Agar

Beet), and are we also to infer that the all-loving God, whom Jesus taught His disciples to address as "Our Father," and who is said not to be willing that any man should perish, but that all should turn to Him and live, is to be defied and thwarted by one of His creatures? Surely no one would like to give an affirmative answer to such a question.

"Jehovah reigns, He dwells in light,
Girded with majesty and might,"

and will never permit a monster in any shape or form to triumph against His will.

If, as we have already reminded you, the Devil and hell are not now fashionable themes for the preacher, why should the horrid picture be re-drawn? Certainly not because we have any particular liking for the work, but rather that you may know the awfulness of the doctrine to which you acquiesce, and which you probably believe to be countenanced by the Scriptures, although you may not have troubled to examine the matter for yourselves. Besides, if this is the enemy you are called upon to fight, and to overcome, it is as well you should know him and his wiles; and to show that we are not overstating this aspect of the case, we give the pronouncement of a notable Professor of Theology—"Behind and beneath the various evil influences around us are unseen personal opponents using their influences to work out their deadly purposes: also, directing their activity, and giving to it a hostile unity, one mysterious foe, the changeless antagonist of all good. This realm of evil, acting under its chief, is an awful counterpart of the realm of good controlled by God, and working out His purposes."—("Manual of Theology," by Agar Beet, 1906.)

Milton toys with this "mysterious foe" idea in dealing with the temptation of Eve by the serpent. He makes the animal a mere instrument in the hands of the wicked Satan. In the narrative itself (Gen. iii.) there is no suggestion of any such superhuman influence at work in tempting Eve to partake of the forbidden fruit. "The serpent tempted me and I did eat," is her excuse for disobedience, and the tempter is condemned because of the part it took in the transaction. This would have been unjust if the *real* tempter was an unseen malignant devil. But there was no such monster taking part in the trial, neither need we ever fear any such danger. The great tempters of mankind are flesh and blood, steeped in sin, and the greatest of these is SELF. "Every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin; and sin when it is finished bringeth forth death" (James i. 14, 15).

On a par with the serpent incident are the allusions to the "war in heaven" and the subsequent lightning fall of Lucifer. Where is the material obtained from which the fabric is woven? We turn to the last book of the Bible and find these words—"There was war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, and

prevailed not ; neither was their place found any more in heaven " (Rev. xii. 7). It seems to convey just the idea found in "Paradise Lost," but let us examine the matter. Are we to presume that the passage refers to a time anterior to

"When Adam delved and Eve span" ?

Was it an actual war in the dwelling-place of God? Before answering the first question remember that the book of Revelation—where the passage occurs—was given by Jesus Christ, through His servant John, to make known unto his brethren certain events to transpire subsequent to the delivery of the message. This was the first century A.D. ! Before answering the second, remember it is taken from a book full of daring symbols, and in the same chapter we read of "a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet," and of "a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns" !

Another portion of Scripture (Isa. xiv.), where the figures are appropriated and misapplied, includes the name Lucifer, and strange as it may appear is a prophecy relative to the haughty king of Babylon (verse 4), who, in his pride said : "I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God. . . . I will be like the Most High." It is *he* who is addressed as having fallen from his exalted position as head of the nations—"O Lucifer, son of the morning, how art thou cast down to the ground, thou which didst weaken the nations."

The word "devil" is frequently met with in the New Testament, and if it does not apply to an unseen monster, whose special mission is to entrap souls, what are we to make of the references? The word itself comes from the Greek "*Diabolos*," meaning an accuser, or slanderer. Any person or persons, therefore, who use the weapons of calumny against their fellows can be said to be devils—*e.g.*, "Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?" Judas slandered, maligned, falsely accused his Master, and so became a "devil." Again, "The devil shall cast some of you into prison." So said Jesus to the Church at Smyrna. Who false-accused, imprisoned, persecuted, and often took away the lives of the followers of the Lord Jesus? The Pagan authorities—they were the devils the Christians had to fear.

Then there is the allied word Satan which, with the capital "S," looks so uncanny. This uncanniness is removed by *translating* the word, and giving its meaning. A satan is an *adversary*, and it is so rendered frequently in the Old Testament—*e.g.*, 1 Kings xi. 14 ; 1 Sam. xxix. 4.

A holy angel was a "satan" to Balaam (Num. xxii. 22) ; an apostle was a "satan" to Christ (Matt. xvi. 23) ; Hadad was a "satan" to Solomon (1 Kings xi. 14) ; poor Job was troubled by a "satan ;" and Jesus in His message to Pergamos told the Church that He knew "where they dwelt, even where Satan's throne is." In this city the dominant object of worship was the Roman Emperor. "The city was still officially the capital of the province,

and especially it was recognised as the chief centre of the imperial worship, in which the unity and loyalty of the province were expressed. It was the worship of the Emperor that was recognised, when the Apocalypse was written, as the special foe of Christianity, as Anti-Christ, as Satan" (Ramsay). So we are not for a moment to suppose that the "prince of darkness" had abandoned his throne in the nether regions, to assume a temporary one in Asia Minor for the express purpose of inflicting torture upon the servants of Christ.

And so we might go on indicating the differences existing between the imaginary devil and satan of ancient mythology which early became incorporated into a corrupt Christian system, and the devil and satan of the divine records. There is no room for such a fiend in God's purposes.

There is, however, one more phase of the subject which we must refer to, as it is of great importance. God sent His only-begotten Son into the world, made like unto His brethren, a partaker of flesh and blood, that by *means of death* He might render powerless that having the power of death. The writer of Hebrews (chap. ii. 14) says that that which has the power of death *is the Devil*—using the word in a wider sense, having a deeper significance than in the passage we have glanced at. The writer adopts a common Biblical method, and *personifies* a principle, and to ascertain what the principle is we have just to ask, What is it that has the power of death? for whatever has the "power of death" Christ was manifested to conquer it, to triumph over it, to render it inoperative. Paul gives the answer in his well-known phrase, "*The wages of sin is death*" (Rom. vi.); and again, "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin."

"Sin," the universal legacy, then, is the great Devil we all have to fear, the great enemy which is ever present with us, and the warfare has to be fought within—not without—the carnal against the spiritual. "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lust thereof" (Rom. vi. 12), for "he that committeth sin is of the Devil, but as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God."

Behold the conqueror of sin and death—the Lord Jesus. "He did no sin." "Death hath no more dominion over Him." The Devil vanquished! The consolation!—"Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." And as many as have a disposition to forsake carnal things, and live after the spirit, He promises the victor's crown of life, when He will complete His triumph by destroying the *Devil and all his works*, "the lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life"; mortality, sin, and suffering of every kind.

J. LEADBITTER.

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Baptism in Relation to the Way of Salvation

Belief and Obedience Essential: Immersion, not Sprinkling, the Mode; the Significance of the Ordinance

"But the eleven disciples went into Galilee, unto the mountain where Jesus had appointed them. And when they saw Him, they worshipped Him; but some doubted. And Jesus came to them, and spake unto them, saying, All authority hath been given unto Me in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptising them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world" (Matt. xxviii. 16-20).

IN this closing paragraph of Matthew's history, we have the commission given to the apostolic band, or the instructions how they were to continue His work now He was removed from them. Like all His teaching, it was concise, yet explicit and full. Their work was to be of a threefold character—make disciples, then baptise them, then teach them to observe all the things commanded. To make disciples the first stage—*i.e.*, to instruct in the essential elements of His teaching and truth, with a view to produce conviction in their minds that they need a Saviour, to point out Jesus as the One given for this saving, to enforce the necessity of repentance, or a turning round, change of purpose and life, and to accept Jesus as their Saviour and King or Lord; then to complete this by being baptised into His name. The new position into which this introduces the disciples makes it possible for them to receive the teaching to observe, or to do all the things commanded. With this commission in view, we go forward to enquire how they carried it out.

In obedience to the promise in Luke xxiv. 4-9, we find they were endued with power when the Holy Spirit came upon them, and the first public address of Peter is recorded in Acts ii. In this we see how the commission was understood and the method of observing it, explanation of the facts concerning Jesus of Nazareth forcibly bringing home to the audience their responsibility in the putting to death of this Righteous One; and when this had brought conviction of sin to the mind of this people, and they raised the anxious cry, "Brethren, what shall we do?" the answer was given in the terms of the commission—"Repent ye, and be baptised everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins." This was the method followed by the apostles and their first helpers in the period of New Testament history—Philip and the Eunuch (Acts viii.), Peter and Cornelius (Acts x.), Paul at Philippi (Acts xvi.).

Thus in the Apostolic Age, baptism was administered only to

those who mentally grasped the elements of the gospel, and who were thus moved to obey this command. It seems most likely that before receiving baptism, the convert made a short profession of his faith; this was the answer of a good confession towards God (1 Pet. iii. 21). There is no single instance in which this rite was omitted, nor in which the method was changed. But how different this to the teaching and practice of the ecclesiastical systems in Christendom to-day! Some denying its necessity, nearly all have changed the subjects and form; and few, very few, recognising its importance or significance. The Church history of the third and following centuries makes known the stages in this downward grade; but space will not allow these to be referred to here.

Baptism was thus the outward sign of an inward change in mind and desire, and was recognised as the admission of the person immersed into the local assembly of the brethren, and was not administered to anyone by right of inheritance, not because they were the children of believing parents. This is the great reason why we cannot, and do not, believe in infant baptism, no matter how it is carried out. It is to those who have faith based upon belief, and this cannot be exercised in infants or in very young children. The meaning of the word baptism and the symbolism of the rite completely exclude the idea of sprinkling as the method, or pouring. It can only be carried out by being plunged into water, being covered, or buried in this grave, then the words of Paul become fully significant, "We were buried, therefore, with Him through baptism into death."

In most of Churches an interview takes place with the enquirer, or seeker, for admission into the Church, and in which a confession of faith is asked for, but the assumption underlying this interview is that the candidate is already in Christ, his sins already forgiven, and that he seeks to avow this by publicly being received into fellowship with the Church. In the strict Baptist Churches this is by a public immersion; but the fact of washing away or putting away sin in this act is never hinted at. In the ecclesiastical system, believing in baptismal regeneration, without faith (and frequently against the desire of the infant, judging from the scenes seen at the font), this aspect of the true baptism is only caricatured: this practice and teaching probably caused by looking upon baptism as taking the place of circumcision.

It is when we come to consider the significance of the ordinance as set forth in the Epistles, that we learn how far the Churches have departed from the faith, in this the initiating step of the Christian life. This teaching is given most plainly in Paul's Epistle to Rom. vi. 1-11. In the previous chapter the apostle had drawn a contrast between Adam and Christ Jesus, the two heads of the family of man to the apostle, and the historical character of the early chapters of the Bible is assured to all who accept the authority of Paul. In this contrast sin and death were introduced as the cause and result of the transgression of the command given

to the head of the natural family of man. In the history of the Second Adam we have perfect obedience, and righteousness and life take the place of the results of the first transgression to those who are brought within its influence and accept the offer; and it is in this relationship—uniting to Christ—that baptism and the mode become of so much importance (verse 2). “We who died to sin, how shall we any longer live therein? Or are ye ignorant that all we who were baptised into Christ Jesus were baptised into His death? We were buried therefore with Him through baptism into death.” We thus see that the baptism is a burial, because those referred to had died unto sin; had repented of their allegiance to the lord or ruler sin, had changed this allegiance in renouncing sin, and desired to confess Jesus as their Lord, and in baptism sought the cleansing and the changed relationship; and not only this, but became so united to Him, in this baptism into Him, that His life and theirs become one. The apostle expresses this very strongly in his letter to the Galatians ii. 20—“I have been crucified with Christ; yet I live; and yet no longer I, but Christ liveth in me; and that life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God”; also—“For as many of you as were baptised into Christ did put on Christ” (iii. 27). What mode can set forth this teaching but that of immersion, having died unto sin, by confession of faith and repentance, being buried into His death, and raised unto a newness of life in Him? This is or should be the result of the baptism into the Name Jesus, not that it is fully experienced in the initiation in all its heights, depths, or lengths; but it should be grasped in its initiation, and continually kept before the mind as the result to be attained, a complete subduing of the old man with all the lusts, and a putting on the new man with all the fruits of the Spirit as the result of the union into Him, the Lord the Spirit.

We have seen that the Lord Jesus gave it as the commission to the apostles, that the apostles and the saints obeyed it, that the teaching of the apostles in its meaning and character require faith, intelligent obedience, loving compliance, to die to sin, buried into His death, resurrection unto holiness and righteousness.

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